

anything that they want, it's just that  
in all those hours of  
voices voices voices  
I feel nothing essentially either kind or daring or noble,  
and not the least bit worth all that time shot through  
the head  
and you remember when you used to run them out into the  
night instead of just letting them wear themselves  
down,  
those with their lonely wish for accolade, and you are  
ashamed of yourself for putting up with their mostly pure  
crap  
but then your wife would say or at least think,  
"do you think that you are the only living person on  
earth?"

you see, that's where the devil's got  
me.

so I listen to them and they are  
fulfilled.

#### HORSE FLY

the young man with his cap on backwards  
came up to me at the racetrack  
and asked, "who do you  
like?" and I answered,  
"don't you know that when you tell your  
horse to somebody else it never  
runs?"  
he acted as if he hadn't  
heard: "who do you like in the  
exacta?"  
"I don't bet exactas," I told  
him.  
"why?" he  
asked.  
"because they take a 20 percent  
cut," I responded.  
he acted as if that fact had nothing  
to do with anything.  
in a further effort to delete him from  
my existence  
I stated, "I don't bet daily doubles,  
parlays, quinellas or  
trifectas."  
it was useless: "who do you like  
in this race?" he  
repeated.



"Your Mother's Ass,"  
I informed  
him.

as he checked his program  
I walked  
off.

#### ROSARY

my father was a man full of  
sayings:

"early to bed and early to  
rise ..."

"a fool and his money ..."

"you made your bed now lie in  
it ..."

"a penny saved is ..."

"do as I say, not as I have  
done ..."

"if you don't succeed, suck  
eggs ...."

there were others but I have  
forgotten them.  
how he would toll them off  
endlessly ....

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when he died I went to look at  
him in his casket.  
everybody talked about how good  
he looked, "peaceful! look at him,  
how peaceful! they've fixed him up  
real nice!"

I just looked at him  
almost expecting him to pop off  
one of his sayings:

"a dead ass is better than no  
ass at all ..."

or